

# Making Mealtime Memories

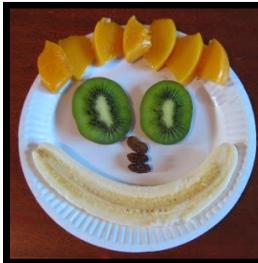
## Building a Healthy Smile

Using snack time as a way to engage children in oral health can be a fun and effective activity. This snack gives everyone a way to express their own smiles and gives you a chance to talk about foods that help keep your child's teeth healthy. Letting children play with their food is a great way to start conversations about healthy choices and will allow them positive interactions with foods that they may struggle to accept.



### Ingredients

- \* Any variety of fresh fruits and vegetables (choose lots of different shapes and colors)
- \* Paper plates
- \* Non toxic crayons



### Directions

- \* Assist in drawing a face shape on each paper plate with non-toxic crayons.
- \* Chop fruits and vegetables into small shapes and sizes and have children help sort fruits and vegetables into a muffin pan.
- \* Use the prepared fruits and vegetables to make a face with a big healthy smile.



# Healthy Living With Head Start

## Celebrate Dental Health Month

Let's go to the Dentist!



## 5 Ways to Get Ready for the Dentist

A visit to the dentist is not always an easy trip. Many children have anxiety associated with dental visits or may just have a hard time with new experiences. These are some things you can do as a family to help everyone have a happy and successful visit to the dentist:

1. **Talk about it** - Explaining to a child what the dentist does, how he does it, and what to expect will give your child a chance to prepare themselves for the dentist.
2. **Normalize the dentist** - Making the dentist a normal part of life by reading dental themed books, involving dental themed toys in playtime, and making oral health an important part of your family culture will make a dental visit less stressful for children.
3. **Practice makes perfect** - Playing dentist can help children understand what can be expected at the dentist office, it will also give them a chance to practice opening wide and counting teeth.
4. **Stay positive** - Keeping your attitude positive will help everyone stay calm and happy at the dentist office.
5. **Take care of your teeth** - The most important part of getting ready for a visit to the dentist is to keep everyone's teeth healthy by brushing, flossing, and making healthy choices every day.

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# Dental Q & A's



As a caregiver, you are expected to fill many roles in your child's life to make sure they are getting the best start you can provide. Here are a few answers about oral health and dental care that may help your family stay on track for a happy and healthy smile:

**Q: When should my child see a dentist for the first time?**

**A:** The best way to introduce your child to the dentist is as a quick exam as soon as they get their first tooth (or by age one). Many people bring their children into the family dentist as early as possible to allow their child time to form positive memories at the dentist office.

**Q: Should I see my dentist if I am pregnant?**

**A:** Yes, regular oral health care is an important part of a healthy pregnancy. Maintaining a daily routine of brushing and flossing as well as regular cleanings with your dentist will help avoid complications associated with dental decay.

**Q: What causes dental decay (cavities)?**

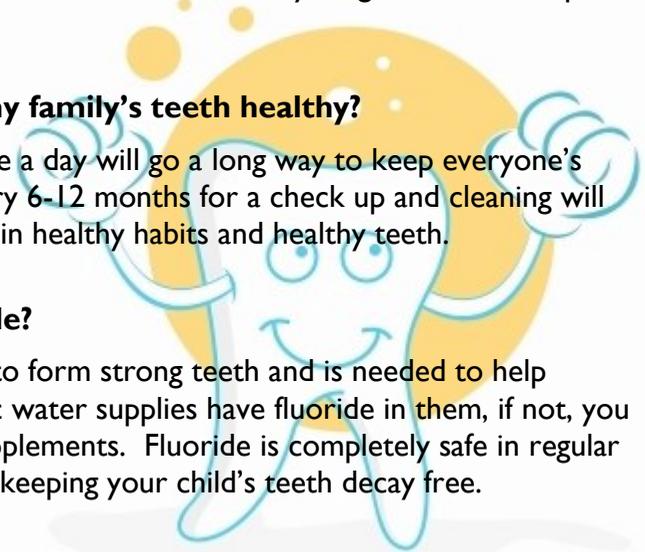
**A:** The food we eat causes our mouths to become acidic. Acid can break down the minerals in your teeth causing decay. The same is true for anything we drink except for water.

**Q: What can I do at home to keep my family's teeth healthy?**

**A:** A routine of brushing and flossing twice a day will go a long way to keep everyone's smile healthy. Seeing your dentist every 6-12 months for a check up and cleaning will help keep everyone on track to maintain healthy habits and healthy teeth.

**Q: Do I need to give my child Fluoride?**

**A:** Fluoride is an important mineral used to form strong teeth and is needed to help protect teeth from decay. Many public water supplies have fluoride in them, if not, you can ask your doctor about fluoride supplements. Fluoride is completely safe in regular doses and can be an important part of keeping your child's teeth decay free.



# Glitter Brushing Timer

These handmade timers will help make tooth brushing more engaging and will also help encourage a full 2 minutes of brushing. Have your child shake up the glitter filled jar, set it down where it can easily be seen, and brush until the glitter settles.

**Materials Needed:**

- \* Small jars (baby food jars will work well)
- \* 1 glitter glue pen
- \* 1 teaspoon of glitter
- \* Water
- \* Super glue



**Directions:**

- \* Fill the jar 3/4 full with water
- \* Add the contents of the glitter glue pen
- \* Add the extra glitter
- \* Put a few dots of super glue on the rim of the jar, secure lid tightly, and let glue set
- \* Shake jar until everything is fully mixed



Jazzing up Oral Hygiene